CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 12 FEBRUARY 1990 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING AN AIDE MEMOIRE ON THE AUSTRIAN OFFER TO HOST THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN VIENNA

I have the honour to forward to you an Aide Mémoire on the Austrian offer to host the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Vienna and would ask you to be kind enough to circulate the Aide Mémoire as an official document of the Conference.

As you are well aware, the Austrian Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alois MOCK, has presented this offer in his statement before the Conference on Disarmament on 6 February 1990.

(Signed): Franz CESKA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

AIDE MEMOIRE

In the course of 1989, substantial progress could be achieved within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament towards concluding its work on a Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction. Austria agrees with others who consider 1990 as the decisive year for a breakthrough in the negotiations.

Austria fully recognizes the great importance of such a Convention and of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons envisaged under its provisions. Already two years ago, Austria expressed for the first time her willingness, before the Conference on Disarmament, to host this Organization in Vienna. In the light of progress recently achieved in the negotiations, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, Alois MOCK, has officially submitted the detailed Austrian offer in his statement addressing the plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament on 6 February 1990. With this offer inviting the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to Vienna, Austria also hopes to provide an additional impulse to the negotiations with respect to the structure and tasks of the Organization.

Austria's readiness to contribute to the work of international organizations has in the past found its visible expression in the construction of the Vienna International Centre (VIC) housing the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Organization for Industrial Development (UNIDO) as well as the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Vienna International Centre was financed in its entirety by Austria and is at the disposal of its users for a symbolic rent of one Austrian shilling per year.

Austria is ready to host the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the VIC under the same conditions as apply to the organizations already located there.

(1) Austria will provide the Organization with office space commensurate with the personnel needs of the Organization during the preparatory phase, during the envisaged ten-year phase for the destruction of chemical weapons, and during the ensuing phase of permanent control activities. Austria intends to provide the Organization with provisional headquarters containing office space for 450 to 600 persons. This building, located in the centre of Vienna and providing net office space of 6,300 square meters, would be fully renovated and provided free of charge.

In order to provide for permanent headquarters, Austria envisages the construction of an office building in the area of the Vienna International Centre or adjacent to it as soon as the overall size is determined. Austria would provide the necessary land and bear the cost of construction of that office complex.

(2) In order to provide for equality of status between the new Organization and the international organizations housed in the VIC, Austria would grant to the Organization and its personnel the same immunities and privileges accorded to IAEA, the United Nations Office at Vienna, and UNIDO.

(3) Austria will reimburse the expenses incurred by the rental of adequate conference space for such conferences of the Organization that cannot be held in the building of the Organization itself or the VIC for reasons of size.

Moreover, the future Organization could profit from the following facts:

- the possibility of direct communication with the United Nations system,

- the possibility of a close exchange of know-how with the IAEA located in Vienna since 1957, which has accumulated ample experience in the field of inspection,

- the possibility of cost reductions through the joint use of technical facilities,

- the facilitation of work owing to Vienna's experience in organizing international conferences and the availability of the necessary personnel and technical infrastructure.

International civil servants of the future Organizations could make use of those advantages available in a city which has oriented itself towards an international community for many years: the existence of ten schools of international character providing tuition in eight different languages, three foreign-language theatres and the existence of churches and houses of worship for many religions.

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